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A PROPOSED PLAN FOR DEVELOPING PURPOSEFUL
COMMUNICATIONS BETWEEN SCHOOL AND HOME
FOR THE WENATCHEE ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

A Thesis

Presented to

the Graduate Faculty

Central Washington State College

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Education

by

Kenneth P. Shamberger

July 1962

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SPECIAL
COLLECTION

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APPROVED FOR THE GRADUATE FACULTY

Ernest L. Muzzall, CHAIRMAN

D. Daryl Basler

Albert O. Weissberg

DEDICATION

To my wife Marguerite, for
her continued encouragement
and understanding.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I wish to express my sincere appreciation to Dr. Ernest L. Muzzall, Chairman of the Graduate Committee, for his guidance and direction in the completion of this thesis.

Appreciation is also extended to Dr. D. Daryl Basler and to Dr. Albert O. Weissberg for serving on the Graduate Committee.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Communication in one form or another has always been a vital and contributing factor to the society of mankind. The importance of good understanding through communication cannot be underestimated, especially in the field of education.

The importance and scope of communications is pointed up by Ramseyer:

Communicating is the ebb and flow of feelings and ideas among people. It is much more than reading or hearing, speaking, writing, or depicting. It is more nearly the comprehending of whatever feelings and ideas those skills are struggling to transmit. It is even more the desire to know what consequent thoughts are provoked by that which is communicated (29:51).

Campbell and Gregg think in a similar vein:

Communication is the process by which directions, information, ideas, explanations, and questions are transmitted from person to person or from group to group. Without communication there can be no purpose commonly understood and accepted, nor can there be coordinated efforts of those contributing to that purpose. Not only does communication enable the members to understand the purposes and tasks of their organization, but it also promotes their acquaintance and acceptance of one another (6:298).

Communication, then, permeates all of life. Its purpose is to foster understanding among individuals and community groups. To

do this effectively, many types and form of communication should be used.

Albig clearly brings into focus the impact of communication upon society:

Underlying all social processes and all societal forms is the transfer of meaning between individuals. Social life can exist only when meaningful symbols are transferred from individual to individual. Group activities of any sort are impossible without a means of sharing experiences. In the terminology of the social studies, the process of transmitting meaningful symbols between individuals is designated "communication" (2:33).

For purposes of clarification and for developing a purposeful program of communications between home and school, it appeared advisable to review the literature concerning communication. This has been done. Excerpts from and comments about the literature reviewed will be found in Chapters II and III of this thesis.

The proposed plan for school-home communication based upon these findings will be developed in Chapter IV.

I. THE PROBLEM

Statement of the problem. The problem was to study the area of communication between school and home (1) to ascertain the importance of school-home communications; (2) to help devise a way of providing better education for the children in the Wenatchee schools

through a sound program of school-home communications; and (3) to create for the Wenatchee School District elementary schools an effective communication program between the schools and the homes.

Importance of the study. Lack of clear and complete communication has been the cause of misunderstanding among people and groups of people. This is as true in Wenatchee as elsewhere. Perhaps it is time educators face the fact that we have been negligent in accepting the responsibility for well planned, up to date communication with the public. Our emphasis has been upon the basic educational and technical aspects of our work. We have been inclined to overlook or underestimate the need and importance for keeping our public adequately informed (11:13). It is felt that this condition exists in the Wenatchee elementary schools and that measures should be taken to improve this condition. Therefore, this study has attempted to establish the need for an effective, well organized, clearly defined communication program between the school and the people in the homes of the school service areas of the Wenatchee elementary schools.

Limitations of the study. This study was limited to those forms of communication particularly suited to explaining the function and purpose of the educational program in elementary schools. The materials used were obtained by a careful review of leading books and

periodicals, most of them from the library of Central Washington State College, Ellensburg, Washington.

II. DEFINITIONS OF TERMS USED

Communication. The term means the transmitting of feelings and ideas among people.

Oral communication. Oral communication implies the spoken word used in transmitting feelings and ideas between individuals or groups.

Written communication. This term is used to denote those kinds of communication which require the written, typed, duplicated, and printed word.

Graphic devices. This term refers to that type of communication best done by use of such things as graphs, charts, slides, filmstrips, and moving pictures.

Activity devices. An activity device includes all sorts of projects involving both staff and lay participation. This may include oral, written, and graphic forms of communication. Some examples are study groups, social evenings, and parent teacher conferences.

School service area. This refers to the population area served by the school.

CHAPTER II

COMMUNICATION

In reviewing literature, this investigator found that most authorities tended to agree upon general basic concepts of communication. This chapter will relate many of those concepts.

One principle or goal of communication is to convey information and knowledge (23:19). This probably is one of the chief reasons people wish to communicate. Information and knowledge can be related by using many media. These will be developed in Chapter III of this thesis.

Timing is important. A person is never more eager to receive information or knowledge about heart disease than when he has suffered a heart attack (14:15).

Campbell has this to say about information:

Communication is the process by which directions, information, ideas, explanations, and questions are transmitted from person to person or from group to group. Without communication there can be no purpose commonly understood or accepted, nor can there be coordinated efforts of those contributing to that purpose. Not only does communication enable the members to understand the purposes and tasks of their organization, but it also promotes their acquaintance and acceptance of one another (6:30).

A second important principle of communication seems to be to deepen the sender and receiver's understanding of the thought

communicated (23:19). "There is not complete communication," wrote McGill, "until the recipient sees, feels, thinks and understands everything in the same frame of reference as the person attempting the communication" (23:19). Don Orton, Dean of the College of Education, University of Utah, reported, "Only 30 per cent of what we write and say is understood" (16:441). Perhaps this reported lack of understanding is explained by Wardle, who stated:

Consequently the value of words, and of any other forms or cues of communication which we use, are only as meaningful as the user and listener make them. This means the experience of the two must meet if the communication is to be effective (37:58).

Communication is not much use or at least does not successfully accomplish its intended result unless the meaning is understood by all parties involved. Zelbo, for example, points out that "communication always involves the exchange of meaning between two or more people. It is never simply a one way street" (40:70).

The question may arise, why does this understanding in communication break down? Undoubtedly there are many reasons. One of the chief reasons might be that people too often fail to understand that communication is a two-way, circular process. Furthermore, the circle may have to be completed more than once before complete understanding is achieved. Agreement may not be a result, but understanding must. Later in the thesis, McCloskey's ideas about

two-way communication, which he calls "encoding," will be discussed.

Another reason for such breakdown is that many people have the "I" complex, are self-centered. People often speak and listen primarily with self in mind. This certainly would present barriers in understanding any message given or received.

A third reason for breakdowns in communications could result from status and position (23:19). This means that it is often difficult to think of oneself on the same status level as the other person. One reason for this, referring to the thought expressed in the previous paragraph, is that people are inclined to think in terms of the "I" complex. A person relating a message to someone else is so intent upon giving this message that he many times thinks in terms related to his own experiences rather than to those of the receiver.

This brings up the importance of background and experiences in sending and receiving messages. The frame of reference, the total background of experiences of the individual sending the message, has a great deal to do with the tone and intent of the message. In turn, the background experiences or frame of reference of the recipient will also greatly influence reception. If the frame of reference and background experience of the sender and receiver are completely different, or different in part, the intent of the message may not be correctly received. The frame of reference of the parties involved, then,

greatly affects the thinking, speaking, listening, and interpreting of that being communicated (40:71). It is, therefore, very important for the person composing a message to try as best he can to understand the background of the person to whom he is sending the message. The greater the effort to understand this frame of reference, the better will the message be communicated.

As Hockbaum says:

In short, communication tends to be perceived and interpreted by a recipient in terms of his own stereotyped perceptions, his own needs, and his own desires.

In order to assure effective communication, then, one must know and take into account the needs and problems, motivation and fears, customs and norms of the people to whom one is trying to communicate and then adjust the form of the communication to their cultural milieu (14:14).

Emotions and prejudices have much to do with the degree to which messages are understood. A person will react to a given message when he is calm and happy in quite different fashion than when he is disturbed or angry. The same is true of the one who relates a message to another (40:72).

Likewise, we see evidence about us every day that logical thinking is distorted because of prejudice and bias. If logical thinking is a determining factor in understanding communication, prejudice and bias must be circumvented.

Understanding could be directly related to the amount of resistance to change built up within an individual. Some people's first reaction to an idea is negative, especially if the idea is new. On the contrary, some are ready to believe and accept any idea presented. Sometimes such quick surface acceptance is not based upon complete understanding. This misunderstanding may lead to still further confusion and deep-seated difference of opinion (40:72).

Another barrier to understanding is the language used (40:72). This statement does not have reference to whether German, Spanish, or English is used. However, in some situations this could and would affect understanding. The reference here is to the choice of word, phrases, expression, and local flavor of a given language. An example of a medical doctor using technical terms while conversing with a common laborer is more to the point. The conversation would be better understood by the laborer if the doctor used terms and expressions familiar to the laborer. This same basic principle can be applied in most situations where communication is involved. The parables of Jesus, the master teacher, offer another example of a man using language clearly understood by those to whom he was speaking.

The principle of understanding in communication is clearly summed up by Wardle: "The communication moves through three

stages of thought, message, and response. . . . Good communication is when the thought, message and response are in agreement" (37:357).

The reference just cited introduces a third goal of communication: the goal of getting agreement or acceptance and belief of information, direction, questions, and ideas communicated from person to person and from group to group (23:19). This is sometimes difficult. Extensive mobility of people, "public interest" groups, varied backgrounds, biases, opinion, personal and group preference, and varied economic levels make difficult the common acceptance of a given communication. This only strengthens the concept that many media must be used and that they are more effective if they are continuous. "Remember," warns McGill, "that people learn in small quantities; don't try to achieve all in one try" (23:20).

A fourth fundamental goal of communication is to provoke action (23:19). With most people, this is more difficult than the other goals mentioned. It is not uncommon for people to accept and even believe information or ideas. It is sometimes difficult for these same people to act upon their opinions or beliefs. There are even people who, while willing to modify their opinion about a certain idea, are not willing to modify their action relative to this same idea. Attempts to communicate with people of varied backgrounds, experiences, and

motivations and to stir them into common action calls for a well planned program of communication.

Hockbaum clearly suggests this:

. . . disconnected random communication or educational efforts can be expected to be less effective in the long run than a continuous well-planned and well-integrated program where each message is based on previous messages, reinforces them, and in turn provides a basis for subsequent messages (14:16).

What has been written so far in this chapter about communication is substantiated by McGill:

Communication has four fundamental goals which are clear and distinct in human or business relationships. They are: to convey information and knowledge; to deepen understanding; to get acceptance and belief; and to provoke action (23:19).

While reviewing the literature, it was found that authors expressed ideas about communication as it relates to education. Since this paper deals mostly with the educational ramifications of communication, especially those concerning the school and the homes of the school service area, the views of these writers will be related. This will help provide a background for points developed later in the thesis.

One of the prime reasons for establishing a good program of communication between school and home is to help develop an educational program which will please the people of the school service area and make the professional educators pleased and proud. There

must be a flow of communication from school to the homes. There must be ways provided for the school to be advised of the opinions, ideas, and feelings represented in the homes of the service area.

Whitmer writes:

Like most problems communication requires continuous effort and creative endeavor. But the effort is worth the price in building a good school system in which there is a maximum of effective intercommunication and understanding (38:96).

Abrams substantiates what Whitmer says about a continuous communication program when he quotes Heckinger, publisher of the "Bridgeport Herald," Bridgeport, Connecticut:

"We lose or win the battle in the long-time, day-by-day contacts with the press and its personnel and not in a sudden crash program of propaganda," warns Heckinger, who added, "We must re-educate the public and thus remove the generally accepted concepts that education is a magic cure-all and that education is cheap" (1:41).

Although this investigator does not feel that involvement is the only approach to communication, he does feel that it is important. Curtis (8:91) feels that involvement is especially important: "Unfortunately, large school systems all too frequently attempt to substitute communication for involvement."

Curtis further states:

Only when communication points the way toward maximum involvement and is supplemented by maximum involvement does it provide the goal toward which all systems, large and small, should strive (8:93).

To realize the truth implied in the above reference, one has only to recall some project in which he has been personally involved. It is probable that such involvement sharpened his interest and support.

A great "quantity" of communication is not necessary. However, it seems advisable to put emphasis on the quality of communication. Even though we need an ample amount of communication flowing from and to school and home, every effort should be made to ascertain the quality of that communication. This point is firmly established by Kaiser:

While there are many techniques for increasing the "quantity" of home-school communication, it is the "quality" of our communication that needs investigation and improvement.

. . . What is needed is not necessarily more communication but more meaningful communication (17:36).

Even though school-home communications and public relations are not exactly synonymous, they do tend to embody some of the same basic goals. The following goals for public relations may be equally adapted to the purposes and goals of a good school-home communication program. These are taken from the AASA Twenty-eighth Yearbook:

Its purposes, [the purposes of a good public relations program] more specifically stated, will include the following: (a) to inform the public about the work of the schools, (b) to establish confidence in the schools, (c) to rally support for proper maintenance of the educational program, (d) to develop awareness of the importance of education in a democracy,

(e) to improve the partnership concept by uniting parents and teachers in meeting the educational needs of children, (f) to integrate the home, the school, and the community in improving educational opportunities for all children, (g) to evaluate the offerings of the schools in meeting the needs of the children in the community, and (h) to correct misunderstandings as to the aims and objectives of the schools (28:14).

Still comparing public relations and home-school communication programs, some principles and criteria should be closely followed in planning either program. These, too, are taken from the AASA Twenty-eighth Yearbook:

Sound school public relations must be honest in intent and execution, intrinsic in the school program, continuous in application, positive in approach, comprehensive in character, sensitive to the publics concerned, and simple in meaning and conception (28:17).

A summary for this chapter is provided by Dr. Gordon McCloskey, professor of education, Washington State University (22:4).

We can increase public understanding and support. But sudden miracles are unlikely. Attitudes change slowly. Development of understanding takes time and sustained work. Always some people will be reluctant to support adequate schools; always some will criticize unfairly.

Competition for public interest and funds will remain intense. We will probably never obtain as much support as we consider necessary. But with well-planned and constant effort to use the vast communication resources available, we can make real progress. Schools will be better. Our profession will be stronger. Let's go!

CHAPTER III

TYPES OF COMMUNICATIONS

One standard for Education has been stated as follows: What the best and wisest parent wants for his own child, that must the community want for all of its children. Any other ideal for our schools is narrow and unlovely; acted upon, it destroys our democracy.

A program for the improvement of lay understanding aims to make more citizens "wisest parents". As the percentage of all people who are "wisest parents" increases, the community concept of what a good school looks like changes. As understanding grows, schools improve (32:293).

In the quotation just cited, Ross makes clear that good communications will reach and attempt to modify the behavior and thinking of all the publics within the school service area. People have individual characteristics and capacities for understanding. Because of this, many different types of communications are needed to create the most purposeful public understanding.

McCloskey gets at the structure of communication through encoding and a discussion of two way communication. To enable receivers to perceive what you have in mind, one must formulate a message that will convey his intended meaning. To do that a person must select acts, gestures, words, or pictures he hopes will communicate his intended meaning. This is called "encoding" a message (21:61).

McCloskey elaborates upon encoding as follows:

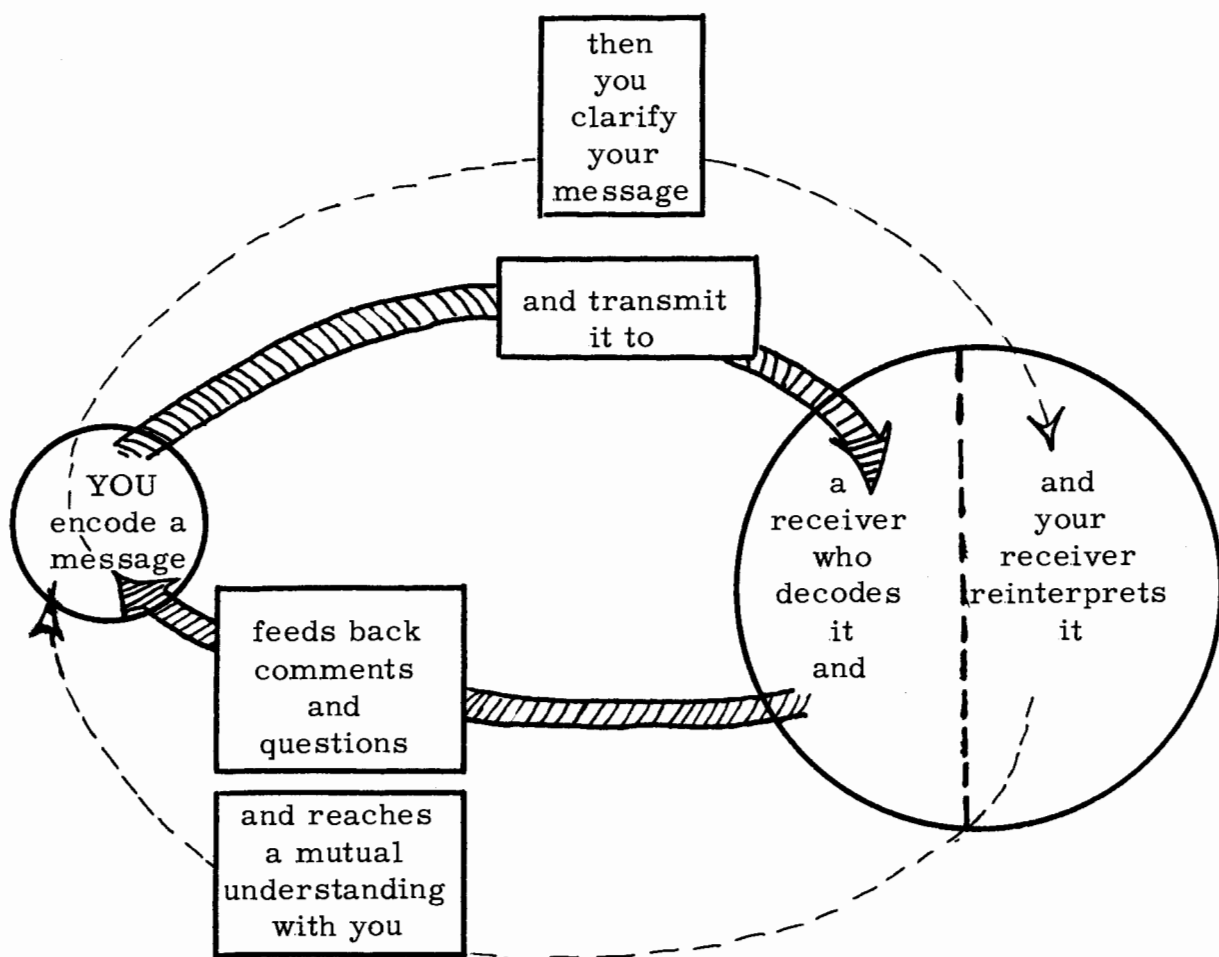
Encoding a message so that it will be noticed, convey the meaning and evoke the response you intend, requires careful consideration of the fact that people's perception and interpretation of acts, words, and pictures are influenced by their motives and experiences.

. . . To encode a message successfully you must ask, "Will the words or pictures I decide to use interest the person with whom I wish to communicate? Will he give this message his attention." If not, it needs to be reencoded with words and pictures that will be sufficiently interesting to command his attention (21:66).

After a message has been encoded, it must be transmitted to one or more receivers. The receiver must decode the message and interpret its meaning. The interpreted meaning may not be the same as the intended meaning. Because of this probability, it is desirable that the person who originates the message has opportunity to get what McCloskey calls "feedback."

Feedback is the second and vital part of two-way communication. It gives both the sender and receiver of a message the opportunity to review and reword misinterpreted phrases and words and consider those things that might be done to arrive at mutual understanding. Two-way communication using both encoding and feedback greatly increases the effectiveness of communication (21:63).

In the following diagram, McCloskey graphically illustrates how two-way communication should be carried on.



TWO-WAY COMMUNICATION (21:63)

This diagram is read by beginning with, "You encode a message," and progressing as indicated by the arrows. The diagram illustrates several interesting facts. One is that a person's message is decoded by the receiver. This allows for the possibility that it might

not be decoded with the same meaning with which it was sent. Therefore, it is especially important to allow some way for "feedback" through comments and questions. Another important fact is that it is wise for the original sender to clarify his message so it may be reinterpreted by the receiver. Even though the diagram only shows a double cycle, it could be that a message might need to cycle several times before the final stage of mutual understanding is reached.

Says McCloskey:

If your receiver has no opportunity to comment or to ask questions, you have no way of knowing how he interprets your message. . . . For those reasons two-way communication is almost always more effective (21:62).

Communication is not always understood the first time it is given. A given communication does not reach all the people the first time. Sometimes a communication must be repeated many times and in many ways if it is to serve its intended purposes. McCloskey substantiates this belief:

Even when you are weary of repeating an important message keep on doing so. Maybe, after you have told your story fifty times in as many places half of the people will have heard you (21:117).

Most people concerned with communication would support McCloskey's concept of two-way communication. In the literature in the field, one author went a step further and discussed the merits of what he terms a three-way process of communication. Without

subscribing to either method as being superior, it does seem that this three-way process of communication is based upon logical reasoning.

The three-way communication process includes upward, horizontal, and downward flow of communication. The upward flow helps those in position of leadership to interpret and understand the feelings and ideas of those in subordinate positions. The horizontal flow of communication makes possible the sharing of ideas and information among members of like groups. The downward flow of communication promotes organizational effectiveness. This is especially helpful when passing ideas, information, suggestions, and directives from superior officers to those of lesser responsibilities (6:295).

It is hoped that the point has been clearly established that good communication is more than telling. It seems evident that understanding between or among those communicating is necessary to complete the communication process.

It is also hoped that it has been established that messages may need to be given many times in as many varied ways. Aside from the fact that communications need to be varied if for no other reason than to meet the needs of individual characteristics, Henry brings up another factor which cannot be overlooked:

Extensive mobility is characteristic of the nation. During the course of a single year, about 20 per cent of its inhabitants move from one residence to another, and about 5 per cent move from one county to another. Not more than 10 to 15 per cent live their entire lives in the same county; not more than 2 or 3 per cent live in the same house or apartment for their lifetime (13:118).

Given this mobility, it is especially important to keep a constant flow of communication going into the school service area so that those moving in could be kept abreast of the school program. Two-way communications would provide opportunity for gathering, from these new residents, ideas and concepts which might be advantageous to the educational program.

Other aspects of mobility that will no doubt affect education and the type of communication flowing from school to home and home to school are (1) the shift of population to suburban areas, (2) the shift of population to industrial and commercial centers, and (3) the inter-regional shift to North and Northwest and South and Southwest (13:119). Such a shifting of population will bring together people of varied cultural, social, and economic backgrounds. This will complicate the problem of constructing effective communications.

With industry continually improving old and developing new methods of transportation, and with the increase of construction type projects, it seems unlikely, at least for the immediate future, that mobility will decrease. Henry quotes Havighurst, who expresses

concern:

Havighurst suggests that the three decision-making groups-- (1) official policy makers, (2) the education profession, and (3) the "public interest" groups have a real chore ahead in relating the social structure of social-class influences and their effects on education (13:120).

If this is so, one way it can be done is through a system of effective communications.

Another and related factor is the change of the common man culture (13:130). Messages to this class must now be couched in terms and meaning to fit a people enjoying a different socio-economic level than this same "name" group had some years ago. Likewise, ideas flowing back spring from a different frame of reference. When we speak of the "common man" now, we should realize he is not the common man of a generation or two ago.

Still another factor, the development of homogeneous communities of ten to fifty thousand people, loosely tied together by a metropolitan complex, is now a part of our community structure. Often these communities have nothing to weld them together for common purposes. There is no predominant community feeling or prestige. Such a community might present barriers to good school-home communications (13:138).

The above factors must have some influence on the social complex of the school. Citizens of these communities undoubtedly

have many questions about the schools. All such queries need clarification and explanation. This is best accomplished by employing a variety of communication media. Four general categories are available.

The decision to separate communications into the following four general categories was based upon a quotation from Ross: "In form the devices built for lifting understanding among community groups can be classified as oral, written, graphic, and activity devices" (32:329).

I. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

Oral communication as defined in this paper (Chapter I) has to do with the transmission of feelings and ideas between individuals and among groups of individuals. The many kinds and types of oral communications will be discussed separately in this study. No attempt is made to discuss all possible types of oral communication. Rather, it is the intent to discuss a sufficient number of types to establish an understanding of and a realization for the necessity of oral communication in a good school-home communication program.

Face to Face

McCloskey points out that "most of the communication

among the earth's peoples is on the person-to-person level, and this is the most effective" (21:69). He elaborates further:

Face-to-face communications are so common that their importance is frequently overlooked. Face-to-face messages play a tremendous role in our communication structure and are especially useful to educators. This statement is made because (1) face-to-face communication is the most widely used and effective form, (2) in the normal course of our work we encounter many face-to-face situations, and (3) the impact of education on the daily living of many people makes it a natural and inevitable subject of conversation among parents, other voters, and children who in a few years will be parents and voters (21:70).

There must be some reason why face to face communication is so commonly used. There must also be some reason why importance is placed upon it. A partial explanation, at least, is pointed out by Schram:

Face-to-face discourse is generally regarded as the most effective instrument of pedagogy and persuasion by virtue of such capabilities as flexibility, immediate provision of reward or punishment, and other characteristics deriving directly from the personal relationship involved (33:105).

Even though it might seem, upon first thought, that this type of communication would not require planning or preparation, this is not necessarily so. Persons involved in face to face communications and intent upon conveying a certain message properly must be well-informed and able to present the facts clearly. This reasoning is documented by Campbell:

Perhaps even more significant to the school administrator is the further conclusion that the mere dissemination of information about schools often fails to increase the knowledge of the citizens about schools and rarely changes their attitudes toward schools. . . .

Very possibly these evaluations will suggest that the one indispensable element in any communication program is face-to-face contact. . . .

This has tremendous implication for school practice. If written communication must be supplemented by face-to-face contact, all teachers and principals must be much better informed about the total school program and much more disposed to serve as communication agents than most of them are today. In some way, too, key citizens will have to become a part and a supplement to the school organization efforts in the communication task (5:128).

Jack Gibbs, a research professor at the University of Delaware, is reported to have said, "The public is developing a mass resistance to mass propaganda programs; . . . thus face to face communication has come to be essential" (1:441).

Parent Conferences

This is a type of face to face communication. However, it seems to have a specific enough nature to be listed separately. Parent conferences are held in many ways. Yet, whether formal or informal, their importance is constant. The parent is concerned about his child and the school. A conference or conversation with teacher, principal, or some one directly related to the school program seems to gain more parental satisfaction than do other forms of communication.

This does not mean this is the only type of communication desired by the parent. Parent conference is also a good way for the school to gain valuable information about the child, home, and community. As Hymes says:

The parent who really cares about his youngster wants all kinds of reports coming at him in all kinds of ways. But this face-to-face conference has many virtues. It makes possible the time needed to interpret the child's development in many areas of growth; it is best adapted to detailing the progress of each individual; it allows parents to participate in making a plan for the future.

Individual person-to-person conferences reduce the chance for misunderstanding too. "Gobbledygook" can be straightened out. Even more important, feelings can be clarified as you talk to people (15:148).

What might have been an actual parent conference is described in the next quotation, showing insight into the real value of a parent-teacher conference. First the conversation relates what has been said by the parent and then gives the response of the teacher. Jung aptly describes a probable situation:

Parent to teacher: But I need to know about the school too--its courses and activities and the objectives of each. In no other way can I counsel my children intelligently about what goes on at school. In other words I need your guidance--not incidentally, but carefully planned so that I can have the benefit of your insight. Without it I cannot carry my full share of our partnership.

Teacher to parent: I wonder if you know how much we need you, how necessary to us is your support, how essential to us is your partnership, if we are to work successfully with your child (17:20-21).

Another important factor here is two-way communication. School people must not forget that much help can be derived from understanding the child and the home.

Speaking

Speaking refers to a speech or talk given before some assembled group. This type of oral communication is very common. Its effectiveness depends on many things, as has been documented earlier in this thesis. It seems safe to assume that it will continue to be one of the many types of oral communication. Those disseminating information by speaking to groups, therefore, should give the matter considerable time and study.

The American Association of School Administrators, in their Twenty-eighth Yearbook, point out that:

The school administrator is constantly before the public, being called upon frequently to deliver speeches before community groups. On the platform, as on all other occasions, the superintendent [any school representative] must reflect a keen interest in the people of the community and their problems.

. . . No time is better spent by the professional leader than the time he gives to serious study of speech organization and presentation.

.

. . . He [the educational leader] will encourage other staff members to participate in this type of community service,

and will use his leadership to broaden their participation (28:281-282).

A suggestion is made that staff meetings could well be used as an in-service device for achieving more effective speaking on the part of the staff. It is also suggested that a list of topics and speakers be compiled from the staff. Staff speakers could then be in readiness to speak on these various subjects to community groups (28:282).

Comments and suggestions on speaking are made by Stearns:

The ability to deliver a good public address has always been an asset to the school administrator. This does not mean that he must be a professional orator. . . . But there are so many occasions when the school superintendent is asked to speak, usually on a school topic, that attention should be given to the art of public speaking. Parent-teacher meetings, service club luncheons, community gatherings, and school assemblies are the groups which the school official must learn to address (35:318).

"There are a few practical suggestions beyond the formal rules," states Stearns, "which may help the busy school executive" (35:319-320):

1. When an invitation to give a public address is accepted, it is wise to plan at once a time schedule for its preparation.
2. Keep in mind the age and the interests of the group.
3. First state the main theme in a simple sentence; then expand the theme with well-organized subtopics and appropriate illustrations to fill up the allotted time.

4. Develop a native humor by studying the rules of wit and humor. No jokes for the sake of a joke and never an off color joke.
5. It is usually not effective to memorize a prepared speech.
6. Avoid reading a prepared speech.
7. Limit the use of notes and use them inconspicuously.
8. The first and last paragraphs are highly important.
9. Try to be rested and relaxed on the occasion of the delivery.
10. Be poised and always natural in the delivery.
11. Prepare for the inevitable question period.

Appropriate, concise comments about speaking are given by Brownell: "Recommended steps in action-getting speeches are (1) to communicate, (2) to illustrate, (3) to motivate, and (4) to activate" (3:200). Brownell also points out that "in short, you are more likely to interest your audience if you compare, contrast, cite cases, quote testimony, make figures clear, arouse curiosity, and use visual aids" (3:195).

Radio and Television

Radio and television afford two important communication outlets for public relations.

Radio and television can help sell the values of education to millions of people by calling attention to what the schools are doing.

Radio and television authorities extend a welcoming hand to educators with ideas and materials of educational worth.

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The future of radio and television in education itself and as a technique of school public relations appears unusually bright if educators join with communal interests in furthering the use of these media (3:216).

From the many studies done on the amount of time people watch television and listen to radio, we know these two media are much used in communication. They, especially television, help influence opinion.

"Radio has been alleged to possess unique persuasive capabilities," states Schram, "because of its often being the first medium to communicate given material to the audience, and because of group feeling alleged to be experienced by the audience" (33:105).

The Twenty-eighth Yearbook of the American Association of School Administrators tells us that:

Radio can use many of the same materials prepared for newspaper.

. . . Nearly all activities and departments of the school have features which can be developed into radio programs. . . .

. . . Well planned school broadcasts are popular in the community and help to achieve the basic objective of the school's interpretation program. Schools need not hesitate to request the time for worthwhile school broadcasts, for the stations are required by franchise to carry a certain number of public-service programs (28:285).

Information about the school which could be adapted to radio broadcasts are:

1. seasonal and holiday broadcasts
2. special campaign broadcasts
3. school news broadcasts
4. radio spot announcements about phases of the school program
5. orientation and other guidance broadcasts
6. public service and other community programs
7. classroom visits which have been taped and then broadcast over radio (28:286).

Such a series of broadcasts might be entitled, as has been done in Tulare, California, "These Are Our Schools."

"Today television is not only commercially possible," Fitzgerald informs us, "but gives promise of becoming the greatest single medium of communication we have" (12:28).

Fitzgerald continues:

Perhaps the idea that television may really change our living habits is far-fetched. Somehow really basic social change comes very slowly, and people have a way of fitting new things into old patterns. But it would be foolhardy not to recognize that television will probably become one of the great new social forces of our time (12:28).

Again:

If television really is potentially as great a communications tool as some believe--and I am one who believes that it is

potentially the greatest--then we face a very real opportunity indeed. For we find ourselves in a situation in which two facts are simultaneously true: Never before have we had so clear an opportunity to plan intelligently the development of a great mass medium--and never before have we so sorely needed better means of communication between people, everywhere in the world (12:185).

Telephone

Much oral communication is carried on between individuals via telephone. Those working in the field of scientific advancement tell us that even greater things are planned for telephone communication. Therefore, it seems reasonable to assume that we should do all that we can to make the most effective use of this instrument.

The telephone is a major instrument for the development of public relations--good, bad, or indifferent. Telephone conversations made by all school people should be friendly, brief, cooperative, efficient, and tactful. Those charged with considerable telephoning should be instructed in the need for the well-modulated friendly voice, the listening attitude, the restrained manner. Because the telephone is likely to give easy access into offices where the personal interview might call for appointment or delay, administrators are rightly inclined to set up machinery to protect themselves from persons whose calls should be referred elsewhere or who interrupt at inopportune moments. However, elaborate machinery for this purpose, or its use when not needed, constitutes a threat to good public relations (28:216).

Teachers' Influence

Teachers, retired teachers, and parent alumni are powerful agents in keeping the community informed through the everyday contacts they have with people on the street, in the

neighborhood, and through participation in the life of the community (19:313).

Not only are they [teachers] presented with numerous opportunities for leadership but their special talents soon win respect and open acknowledgment. Furthermore, they are in a position to talk before groups and to lead discussions on educational and social issues that are far reaching in their effects upon men and women of the community (19:314).

These two references from Kindred clearly bring out the point that teachers are continually confronted with opportunities to inform the public about the schools. In turn they are in a position to gather information from the public that would be helpful to the school in planning its program.

The way the public feels about the teachers of the public schools, or a given public school, has a tendency to affect the way it feels about schools. Brownell indicates this:

It follows, then, that the teacher's efforts should be directed to educate, interpret, lead, and please other people in his relations with them. By so doing, it becomes possible to elicit friendliness and good will. The ability to get along with people is a principal ingredient (3:85).

"Thus the teachers--their personal conduct, their actions and attitudes, and their technical efficiency--" comments Brownell, "are primary factors in reaching the public" (3:84).

Children

An honest, organized public information program is essential to good school-community relations. . . . one other

factor in community feeling must not be overlooked--the pupils who attend these schools. They are perhaps the most efficient carriers of information on school operations at the classroom level. They also can be quite efficient carriers of misinformation if teachers are not careful with explanations (9:159).

The last thought in the previous reference is elaborated upon by Donovan:

Both parents and teachers, it seems to me, must be on guard against the tendency of children to be talebearers. They regale their teachers with stories of life and events at home, and, in turn, tell their parents everything that occurs at school.

Of course, these stories often gain a bit in sensationalism and lose a bit in truthfulness until they are badly distorted (10:220).

This strongly suggests that those working in the schools, especially those most closely associated with the children, must be very careful with speech and action to be certain that their intended messages are correctly interpreted by the children.

The National Education Association publication, The Elementary School Principal, makes the following comment:

Day by day and year by year the most effective interpreters of the school program to the home and to the community are the children themselves. It is they who constantly experience the program and who in a large sense are the program. If the child is not satisfied with his accomplishments, neither will the parents be enthusiastic. If the child is taking home evidences of growth, if he is responding positively to the daily program, the parents will respond affirmatively as well. In the long run, and in the short run, too, the most convincing interpretation will be healthy happy children who are experiencing an all-round wholesome development (26:93).

Listening

Oral communication cannot be effective or complete unless people listen to each other. Listening, then, is vitally important to the total structure of communication. Two-way communication has been declared to be important. Therefore, listening, being an essential part of two-way communication, cannot be overlooked as a factor in oral communication.

Buchmueller substantiates this belief:

When considering problems of communication, one usually thinks only in terms of the spoken or written word. However, in order for inter-communication to be successful, there must be an awareness of the need to listen as well as to speak--to listen with a "third ear," as Theodore Reich, puts it. In other words, successful inter-communication leads to an improved educational program and an increased learning on the part of the teacher, parent and child (4:300).

II. WRITTEN COMMUNICATION

A second general category of communication is that of the written word. The type of writing used in a given situation depends upon the message given, the type of person or public to receive it, and to some extent upon the facilities and finances available.

This section will discuss written communication in general and also some specific types of written communication such as newspaper, letters, brochures, etc. All will be discussed in relation to

school-home communication.

It is probable that most of the communication from school to home, or community public, will be read by adults. If this is true, those doing the writing should keep in mind the average adult reading level. Some authorities say the average adult reads at the ninth grade level. Others say that it is more nearly that of seventh or eighth graders. Perhaps the important thing here is that an attempt be made to write to the level of those receiving the communication. From studies made, it appears that one would be generally safe if he encoded his messages in such a way that they could be easily understood by people reading on a junior high level.

Another fact to keep in mind is that only 20 per cent of adults have completed high school and 6 per cent have completed college (21:90).

It is said that people read for different reasons. Some are (1) to get information, (2) to increase their sense of security, (3) to get prestige and identify themselves with those who have it, and (4) to diminish boredom and anxiety (21:91).

Those who write school communications will likely be more concerned with the first two reasons than with the last two.

Says Kindred:

The basic purpose, then, behind any school publication, is to convey information and to convey it directly, bypassing the media middlemen. The information may be about the entire system or about a specific phase of it; it may be aimed at the entire community or a specific segment of the town. A publication may be designed to cultivate thoughtful evaluation of the school's efforts, to point up problems, or, more often, accomplishments, or it may attempt to move citizens to action. Whatever the publication's purpose, it will succeed only if it is read, and it will be read only if it seems to be worth reading. Determination of what the public in a given school district will consider worth reading conforms to no known set of guides. What the sophisticated executive in Grosse Point considers worth his time might end up discarded and unread in the home of a Detroit assembly-line worker.

In its excellent booklet, Print It Right, the NSPRA suggests the following ways to make your reader pay attention:

By tying your message to his interests.

By telling your story in a lively, simple way.

By pictures and type and layout that catch and hold his eyes (19:83).

Some sound advice about written communications is given by Stearns:

School men should practice the art of writing and should take time to analyze and appraise the results. . . .

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Brevity is a virtue when writing for community consumption. . . .

Another virtue is the use of simple terminology and the substitution of common words for pedagogical phraseology. . . .

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Proofread for errors in grammar and content (35:16).

"A school system is often judged by its correspondence" (28:292). This quotation makes very clear the importance of carefully planning and reviewing the written communication that goes out to the public from the schools.

Letters and Announcements

This area includes such types of information as news letters, bulletins, reprints of articles, report card riders, registration forms, invitations to school affairs, etc. Concerning this type of information, the AASA makes the following statement:

Open letters and announcements to the parents from the principal's office are used by most school systems. Care must be taken that the meaning of such messages is clear, that facts or requests are reasonable and fair, and that the letter is a model in form, arrangement, language, spelling, and general appearance (28:292).

Says Stearns:

Such a letter [news letter] tells of school events, gives parents important information about the activities of the school, and announces future events. . . . These letters should not be too long and should be written in clear style to avoid laborious reading (35:324).

Written communications need careful consideration given to reasonableness, fairness, brevity, and clarity.

Brochures, Reports, Booklets

The mere preparation of brochures, booklets, and reports is not enough. They become effective tools only when they get into the hands of the parents. This fact is substantiated by Hymes:

The more you go, beyond mere listing, to actually putting these materials into parent's hands, the more you show this new approach at work. You teach through what you do. In addition to bringing parents the good ideas in the pamphlets, you give them an experience in which education is not something abstract "over there"--school is not empty words and sounds. Your ideas come right into the living room and affect the way people live (15:200).

Availability and regularity of written communication seems to be advisable if the best results are to be obtained. McCloskey feels that a habit of looking for information from the schools can be acquired by the parents of the school service area. He suggests:

Some people acquire the habit of reading school bulletins which are readily available, and research shows that once people get the habit of depending on a publication they want it and will exert considerable effort to keep it available (21:96).

Of reports and brochures, Stearns says:

In preparing such reports, the rule of brevity, the use of pictorial and graphic illustration, careful preparation of readable manuscript, and rules of good layout should be observed.

. . . No report is of value unless it is distributed on time to the right people. Naturally, the entire printing of such a bulletin has most value if distributed as widely as possible in the community (35:326).

Again, the rule of brevity is pointed out as one criterion of

good written communication. Others are the use of pictorial and graphic illustrations, timing in giving out the material, and giving the material at the right time to the right people.

Newspaper

The newspaper is probably the largest single medium of written communications with the public. This includes information about the schools. Many types of stories can be written about the school program and its activities. This is documented by the Twenty-eighth Yearbook of the AASA:

In planning press releases many special types of stories should be included: straight news; a regular column of short items; the school page; fillers; special issue articles; human interest stories; reports of the activities and accomplishments of pupils or staff members; travel of students and faculty; history of education in the local community; departmental features; and reprints of briefs of articles from professional magazines which either feature or were written by local staff members (28:283).

Stearns, discussing the relation between the school and the newspaper, proposes:

The crux of the matter of relations between school officials and newspapers is a true report of the news about the schools and an accurate interpretation of school policy and school philosophy, distorted neither with an inaccurate bias against the schools nor with an unjustified slant in the school's favor. Because newspapermen are laymen, with a layman's knowledge of school philosophy, and subject to all the pressures, biases, and prejudices of community life, the stimulation of a relationship which enables an accurate interpretation of school policy is of high rank in the program of community relations (35:267).

Stearns also states:

It is legitimate for the school leader through private conference and debate to try to influence editorial comment. However, after such argument has been presented to the editorial staff, the school leader must accord to the editor the right to criticize the schools as well as to praise them (35:323).

There must be some guide lines to use for those who have the responsibility of relating information about the schools to the newspaper. Some of these are pointed out by Stearns:

Certain rules must be remembered in preparation of news releases by school personnel. (1) If the release covers a news event, it must, by all means, be delivered on time. This often means fast writing and delivery by messenger service to the city desk. (2) If it is a news release, the gist of the whole story must be included in the first paragraph, if possible in the first sentence. Other rules of news writing involve terminology, the lead words in the opening and following paragraphs, and brevity coupled with conciseness. (3) Names of local people must be included wherever possible. (4) Quotes are highly desirable, and they must be checked back for accuracy. (5) It must be expected that the story may be cut to conform to the space limitations in the makeup room, and the story may be rewritten to conform to the paper's distinctive style. (6) The story may have a title, but seldom will the title appear as the headline (35:288).

The newspaper is a strong influence for good or ill in any community. It can be so for education. One of the biggest hurdles, perhaps, in creating public good will toward the schools through the press is to keep a constant flow of materials available to the press. This will require cooperation between the school and the press.

Yeager contends that the press is perhaps the greatest

single factor in influencing community opinion toward education:

In the opinion of most school officials, the daily press is the most important single community factor influencing the conduct and progress of the public schools. School administrators should seek a greater understanding of the public press and study the part which the public press can play in the solution of the educational problems of a community. It should be the duty of school officials and local editors to develop a spirit of cooperation in the interests of democracy in general and of public education in particular (39:244).

William J. Thomas conducted a study, in 1944, as part of his Ph. D. Dissertation on the interests of readers of public school newspaper publicity. Yeager quotes Thomas:

These studies would seem to indicate that parents and patrons are vitally interested in the real work of the school, which centers around the pupil. . . . Newspaper editors have not generally caught the significance of school news. School officials have been losing opportunities through their newspapers in acquainting the general public with the real work of the public school and its educational values (39:245-246).

Documentation so far brings out the importance of the newspaper in a school-home communication program. Yeager says, "Channels should be developed and maintained through which school news--features, stories and other forms of school publicity--should flow regularly and unhindered to the public press" (39:247).

Report Card

No attempt will be made here to discuss the merits or shortcomings of a written report card. The purpose here is to establish

the fact that the report card is one method of written communication between school and home. In fact, as Hymes points out, "Some schools never thought of writing leaflets or bulletins or newsletters or notes. They use one form of written communication with parents, however; the report card" (15:143).

At best it is difficult to communicate correct understanding through a report card. Even so, it is still expected and appreciated by many parents. It is a communication--good or bad. Though he thinks the traditional written report card has many inadequacies, Yeager seems to believe that it will be used in the schools for some time yet. He suggests that (1) the positive approach should be used, (2) the report should represent all the factors concerned with the child's progress, and (3) that written reports should be accompanied by personal contacts whenever possible (39:158).

"Honest, complimentary comments by a teacher on a pupil's report card," says Kindred, "may soften the reaction to poor marks. When a conference follows, it establishes an understanding which is impossible to form on paper" (19:298).

The Educator's Encyclopedia expresses the following thought about report cards:

Reporting to parents seems to become more complex as time goes on. Sometimes educators and parents forget that reporting is a method of communication and requires the

participation of both parties. A school system's method of reporting should be agreeable to both educators and parents, and it should be consistent with the philosophy of the school district and within the limitations of the objectives of the school program (34:454-455).

Group Letters

The classroom teacher, by sending letters home to the parents of her school children, can establish an effective medium of school-home communications. The NEA thirty-sixth yearbook, in a discussion of group letters, comments:

These letters which have been used over a period of about nine years, have produced better understanding between school and home. They have helped parents to participate more fully with their children in their school life and to converse more intelligently with them about the school day. The letters have helped both teacher and parents, thru encouraging parents to work out solutions for problems with the school, to look on the school and the home as an active partnership.

The strength of these letters lies in their flexibility, in their use by a teacher when he feels that he truly has something to communicate to the parents, and in the many opportunities for creative personal interpretation of the program in a manner which conserves both teacher and parent time (26:238).

Parent Handbook

The parent handbook is something that any school can prepare with a little time and effort. This is an excellent method of informing the public, especially the parents of the school children, about the school program. Such a booklet may incite parents to ask

questions about the school that otherwise might go unexplained. This provides the link necessary to bring about two-way communication.

The AASA declares that parent handbooks are worthwhile and also suggests materials to include in such a publication:

Pupil welfare subjects that lend themselves well for messages or booklets to parents include such things as: school attendance regulations; work permits; released time for medical and dental care; school bus regulation; . . . fire drills; . . . school lunch; . . . playground supervision. . . (28:164).

The National Elementary Principal, in "Parents and the Schools," indicate that a publication such as a parent handbook can be extremely helpful in furthering home-school communications:

Fathers, mothers, P-TA workers, trustees, teachers, school administrators, and a professor of education have reacted similarly to the [parent] handbook. Their comments have been unanimously favorable as illustrated by these words of a mother: "It gives parents an idea about what the schools are offering. The eye-catching cover and line drawings make one want to go on and find out what it's all about."

Our experiences in this project indicate that a [parent] handbook of this type, attractively illustrated, easily read, and sharply to the point, can prove to be a valuable means of communication (26:188).

The discussion in this portion of the chapter does not exhaust the information on written communication as it relates to understanding between school and home. It is intended, however, that what has been stated will firmly establish the belief that written communication between the school and the home is one vital factor in the over-all school-home communication program.

III. GRAPHIC DEVICES

The business and entertainment world are relying more and more upon some form of visual communication for transmitting their message to the public. Some forms of graphic presentation, says Kindred are "more effective than any other media for creating understanding and stimulating constructive action with reference to particular types of problems" (19:174).

Kindred continues:

As a rule, people generally prefer to see rather than to hear or read about a given thing, and particularly when the subject is children or taxes. Unquestionably this preference stems from the fact--no matter how complex the subject may be--that visual pictures can be understood and appreciated with a minimum of effort.

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Another reason for including audio-visual media in public relations work is that they leave deep and lasting impressions on those who hear and see them (19:175).

The American Association of School Administrators in their Twenty-eighth Yearbook, discusses the significance of the use of graphic materials:

Posters, sign boards, and displays can call public attention to school undertakings and accomplishments. These should be at conspicuous points in the school buildings and elsewhere in the community. . . .

Folder type bulletins also are becoming popular in the presentation of basic information to the general public. . . .

There are many used for brief, pointed paragraphs written in light, humorous vein. Some can be printed in illustrated posters, other as boxed items in publications, and still others as descriptions to accompany charts, graphs, photographs, and other graphic materials. One should be alert for ideas to enrich the use of this medium (28:291).

The Yearbook continues:

By and large the public has few opportunities to observe the schools at work. For that reason good pictures of daily activities in all departments are helpful in bringing tangible information to parents and other friends of education. In order to select the activities which, if photographed, will be the most significant of the daily work of the schools a careful inventory of the entire program should be made (28:295).

The importance of using graphic devices in presenting the program of the school to the public is made by Stearns:

It is trite to say that a picture is worth many words; but it is true if the picture actually tells the story. A graph, properly prepared, is usually better than a table of figures. . . . The use of graphic presentation by corporations in preparing stockholder reports, by government agencies in presenting vital statistics, farm reports, military development, and numerous other types of government data, make it imperative that schools use the same devices in presenting school material to the public.

Care must be exercised that graphic material is presented accurately. . . . Otherwise, distorted and inaccurate impressions may be created (35:313).

The scope and use of the specific graphic devices mentioned in the reference just quoted will vary from school to school. Much will depend upon the facilities at the disposal of the particular system and upon the vision and ingenuity of the person or persons responsible

for charting the communication program.

Some of the suggested graphic devices are:

1. posters
2. diagrams
3. graphs
4. cartoons
5. Folding bulletin with illustrations
6. sign boards
7. displays of pupils' work and projects
8. pictures
 - a. still--of some particular event
 - b. candid--sometimes introduce the humorous side,
or is appropriate to make a specific point
 - c. slides--a series or individual
 - d. filmstrip--with transcription or running commentary
 - e. movies
 - (1) commercial documentary film about some
phase of education (32:332)
 - (2) teaching film that by public showing can
increase understanding of modern education
(32:332)

(3) "Homemade" documentary film which interprets the local schools (32:332).

Many times, the cost of equipment and obtaining the required technical skill to produce presentable filmstrips and movies is prohibitive. However, with a little training and limited equipment, most schools could make effective use of still, candid, and slide pictures. The more expensive movies can be rented or purchased from larger school districts or commercial companies.

Much can be done with graphs, charts, signs, and diagrams. The Wenatchee school district made excellent use of graphs, charts, diagrams, and architects' drawings in presenting to the public the need for passing a bond issue. The board had several sets of the story of the need for the bond election prepared for them and mounted upon placards about 3 feet by 4 feet in size. The school board members then took a set of these materials and with them told the story to all community groups with whom they could obtain an audience. The bond election was successful. Many citizens of the community commented as to how valuable the materials were in helping them understand the particulars of the issue.

The proposed use of graphic devices in telling the public about the schools is adequately summed up by Kindred:

It is obvious that a collection of appropriate audio-visual materials enables the administration to take the school to the people. Through the reproduction of information on a screen, they can acquire an accurate and realistic understanding of the system, its conditions, needs, and practices. And when reproduction is accompanied by interesting and pertinent commentary, the chances are better than ever that members of an audience gain as much, if not more, from this experience than from a personal visit to the system (19:175).

IV. ACTIVITY DEVICES

Many things that can be done in the interests of good school-home communications would or could fall into this general area of communications. Even though an attempt were made, it is unlikely that all the media that would fall in the activity device classification could be listed. For this reason, only some of the representative devices from the literature in this area are included.

The following quotations are given to document the plan for school-home communication discussed in Chapter IV of this thesis.

Public Involvement

Campbell, in a quote from the White House Conference, clearly states the case for public involvement:

This committee believes firmly that the surest way to bring about major improvements in education is through wider participation of the public in school affairs. In a democracy, people will not give automatic support to things they do not understand, and they do not understand unless they are in possession of

information. The crux of obtaining major school improvements, then, is the provision of information, through a method or methods designed for that purpose (5:129).

In their book, Elementary School Administration and Supervision, Elsbree and McNally, too, discuss using people and resource persons and involving them in the program of the school:

Community relations must be a "two-way street." We are all aware of the principle that one of the best ways to make a friend is to permit him to perform some service for you. Applied to the community, this principle has several advantages. First, as implied above, it tends to form closer school-community bonds. Citizens who contribute time, effort, talent, and materials to the school then have a personal stake in that school. In a very real sense it becomes their school, and they support it loyally. Second, the arm of the educator is extended, bringing into the school specialized services and assistance that the staff alone could not supply. Third, it enriches and improves the learning program of the children, and increases their understanding of and respect for the abilities and services of community members (11:438).

The principal of the school or the person in charge of a program of communication should keep a file on things various people in the school service area can do successfully--especially those things that would be helpful to the boys and girls in the school. He should be alert to such areas as music, dance, construction, science, costuming, customs and articles of other lands, hobbies, conservation specialists, mechanics, and all areas that could effectively enrich the curriculum. It is expecting too much for any one teacher to possess skills in most of the areas mentioned above (11:439). For this

reason, it seems wise to utilize the talents that exist in the community to enrich the school program. So doing also increases the citizens' understanding of and respect for the schools.

This applies not only to business men and leading citizens of the community, but to the parents of the school service area as well. Perhaps it is even more important to involve the parents of a service area. The thirty-seventh NEA yearbook points out:

Where parents have some part in the school program, they come to understand school problems and achievements. They gain insight into the complexities of teaching. They develop greater confidence in their school. And as they grow in their understanding, they become convincing interpreters of their schools (36:92).

Group Meetings

In our society we rely greatly upon group meetings of one kind or another to dispense information. This, a common form of communication, has had both its failures and successes. The fact that it is one of the older, much used forms of communication does not preclude its use. However, as with any media of communication, it must be used at the proper time and setting to be effective.

James Hymes, Jr. has this to say about group meetings:

The most common means of communication between parents and teachers is the group meeting. You ought to be clear about the general purposes the group meetings serve, to be aware of the variety of types of meetings, and to have some know-how in

conducting meetings. With this background you can feel confident about holding meetings of your own parents in your classrooms.

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Meetings are useful only when they serve a distinctive purpose. Unless the purpose is one you and your parents are seeking, you do better to skip group meetings entirely and turn to another avenue of communication (15:90-91).

Three principal reasons for holding group meetings are (1) to give out information, (2) to pool the ideas and experiences of many people, and (3) to foster a sense of groupness.

Though there are many types of group meetings, generally they fall into two categories. These are (1) fact meetings and (2) discussion meetings. The techniques for carrying them out are also varied. Some of the techniques used with fact meetings are (1) tell them, (2) question meeting (relating to a type of fact), (3) discussion meeting (about a specific or related fact), (4) panel and symposium, and (5) committee reports. The discussion meeting also uses varied techniques. Some are (1) films as a springboard for the discussion to follow, (2) drama with prepared scripts, (3) role playing, or situation dramas to stimulate discussion, (4) funny sheets or cartoons projected with an opaque projector for the purpose of creating a relaxed atmosphere and also relating information for discussion, and (5) buzz sessions, which tend to involve more people in the initial stages of

the discussion (15:94-128).

In given situations all have met with degrees of success and have their place. Any particular type or technique, however, could be easily overworked and thus lose effectiveness.

Group Parent-Teacher Conference

Many schools, in some form or other, have included parent-teacher conferences as a part of their school program. It may be a part of their reporting system, or it may be a part of their school-home communication procedure.

In an article entitled "Parents and the Schools," the NEA Thirty-sixth Yearbook adequately sums the values of the group parent-teacher conference:

A. Teacher's viewpoint

1. She has met the parents of 90 per cent of the children.
2. The parents have increased their understanding of the objectives and standards.
3. The parents have observed her way of working with children.
4. She has explained her system of pupil evaluation.
5. She has suggested ways that parents can work with her.
6. She has helped establish a friendly relationship with the parents.

B. Parent's viewpoint

1. Met his child's teacher.
2. Observed teaching techniques.
3. Learned what is expected of his child in conforming to school regulations.
4. Learned what he can do to help both teacher and child.
5. Has met his child's classmates and their parents.
6. Has seen in what atmosphere and environment his child spends his school day.
7. Has a basis for understanding what his child is talking about when he talks about school.
8. Has met the principal in his capacity as supervisor (26:232).

"The above points were taken from a specific case so the 90 per cent and the inference to observed techniques may alter with each situation" (26:232).

Parent-Teacher Association

Nearly every school has a chapter of the National Parent-Teacher Association. If not, it has some similar type of parent-school organization. Through these organizations, much benefit to the school program has been accomplished. They have served as an avenue by which communications have traveled both from the school to the home and from the home to the school. They involve people in

the work of the school and many times are the unifying influence between school and community. In a discussion of the parent-teacher association, Stearns declares:

Formal organization of parents, especially in a joint relationship with teachers, does much to aid the community relations of the school. It provides a natural medium for the explanation of the school's program, the exploration of new ideas, the normal reaction of parents to the school's program and its service (35:84).

Too often the staffs of schools, believing that the P-TA is only a parent organization, have chosen to be passive members. The P-TA organization in each school could be a most effective instrument for interpreting the school program to the parents of the school service area.

Parent Visitation

The term "parent visitation" refers to parents visiting the school during the school day when school is in regular session. Perhaps it is the fault of people in education, but many parents think the schools do not wish to have them visit the classrooms. This may be true in some places. However, in talking with many school educators, the opinion has been formed that most administrators and teachers welcome visits from the parents. Furthermore, the interpretation of school activities increases in direct proportion to the increase of parent visitations to school. Their direct observation of

the classroom activities and the overall program of the school does much more to create understanding than many words.

McSwain (24:152) says: "Encouragement of parent visitation to the school and classrooms is another valuable way to interpret the activities of a school and to foster cooperative home and school relations."

Personal Contacts

Even though our American way of life seems to make greater and greater use of mass communication, one must recognize the importance and make use of personal contacts when trying to communicate ideas.

Elementary school principals emphasize in speech and action the importance of personal contacts in interpreting the schools to the public. These contacts are through study groups, through parent-teacher association activities, and through group and individual conferences that the principal and the teachers hold with parents (36:88).

Hockbaum (14:17) emphasizes the worth of personal contacts: "The use of mass media has to be augmented, and at times supplanted by use of the slower and more tedious processes of individual contacts and group interaction."

Lay Citizen Groups

Many school superintendents use lay advisory councils or

boards. In addition to these, many citizen committees, or lay citizens on committees with school personnel, are used to plan and interpret the school program. Kelley has the following to say about the lay advisory council:

The lay advisory council is another means of cooperation between school and community. Care should be taken in such a council that lay participation includes parents and non-parents, town and country people, new and long-time residents, large and small taxpayers, persons favorable and unfavorable to school policies (18:314).

"The old concept of the relationship of the school to the lay public," says Stearns (35:425), "has progressed through three states: 'Keep out . . . ,' 'Come and see . . . ,' 'Let's plan together. . . .'"

Stearns (35:296) also says: "The movement toward lay committees grew from small experimental beginnings until it became the major program of the National Citizens Commission for the Public Schools."

Some of the advantages of lay committees are:

1. Stimulation of thinking--lay people need to think about and appraise their schools and make contributions for their betterment.
2. Spreading the load of board and education work--by involving the lay people in time consuming studies and

supplementing the lay talents of board members.

3. Opportunity to test soundness of policy--opportunity for reaction as policy is being formed.
4. Source of fertile suggestions.
5. Work projects--a well informed and supportive lay public can and will get behind many projects and get things done that would otherwise be too costly or time consuming or both.
6. Means of gaining community support--by involving the lay people and keeping them well informed.
7. Value of widespread sense of sharing in community problems--people take pride in things they help to build (35:300-325).

This whole field of lay citizens groups is related to the topic of involvement discussed earlier. Making use of the ideas and talents of the community tends to bring about better school-community understandings. "When more people have an opportunity to contribute ideas and opinions," says Ramseyer (29:46), "their stake in improvement is raised. In the process they gain some knowledge of the beliefs and attitudes of others."

American Education Week

Reeder emphatically calls attention to American Education Week:

Every school and school system should cooperate in staging "American Education Week." This occurs during the week in which Veteran's Day falls; however, many school systems which have school-levy campaigns celebrate that week before the November election. Helpful suggestions for staging the week may be obtained each year from the National Education Association, one of the chief sponsors of the week (30:587).

As pointed out in the reference just cited, there are numerous ways in which school districts participate in American Education Week. The one basic purpose for American Education Week participation seems to be to bring the public in contact with some phase of the school program. This is good. Too often, educators think that with this they have done their bit toward involving the public for that particular school year and do very little more of a planned constructive nature until the next year during American Education Week. As has been and will be substantiated by documentation in this thesis, a well-planned, continuous program of home-school communications is the ultimate goal for all school systems. Activities during American Education Week, good though they are, are not enough.

Education-Business Day

A day in the school year set aside for the teachers to visit the business and industry interests of the community has been found successful in establishing good school-community relations. The opposite approach has also been taken; the business men of the community set aside a day and visit the schools. Communities who arrange this type of visitation usually plan and follow a time sequence so that it does not lose its effectiveness.

The importance of such visiting days is substantiated by Reeder:

Special days or hours can be announced when the public is especially invited to see the school at work. During every school year, many schools, particularly the secondary schools, have one or more evening sessions for the benefit of the public. This public should be made to know, however, that the school's latchstring is always out. Business and industry have co-operated with the schools, during recent years, in visiting days. These are usually called Business-Education (B-E) days, or Industry-Education (I-E) days. School employees spend a day in visiting the businesses of the community (30:586).

Kindred comments in a similar vein:

Local chambers of commerce, in cooperation with the schools in many communities, help sponsor Education-Business days so that the businessmen may look in on the schools and learn some of the schools' problems. In turn, the teachers spend Business-Education Day visiting the firms and taking a lesson in the operation of business and industry (19:386).

In cooperation with the Chamber of Commerce, the Wenatchee schools recently participated in an Education-Business day. In

expressing his appreciation of the day, one of the business men commented that so often they (the business men and citizens of the community) could see changes in the structure of the buildings by driving past, but seldom, if ever, did they get an opportunity to learn of the changes and progress going on inside the building in terms of the educational program as it relates to the boys and girls. This expression certainly pointed up a weakness on the part of the school people in keeping the citizens of the community abreast of the total program of the school. Greater attempts should be made to help the public understand that the latchstrings of the schools are always out.

Home Visits

From observation and conversation with others concerning the matter of home visitation by the teacher, it would probably be safe to assume that on the whole school teachers do very little visiting in the homes of their students. Yet, if education is to be concerned with the "whole child," a visit to the home could produce information that could not be obtained as effectively in any other way.

Hymes stresses this point:

What do you need to know about a child in a modern school? Everything! What are you trying to find out about a child in a home visit? Everything! You want to know his personal past, his private present and his own very special future. Parents are people who can best reveal this. Home visits are one area

of home-school relations where clearly the parent has a great deal to give. He is the one person who knows the child and knows him well (15:136).

The National Education Association's Thirty-sixth Year-book lists "four possibilities for gains thru visits between parents and teachers in the homes." They are:

1. There is an opportunity for the exchange of information between parents and the teacher, enabling them to have a better understanding of the child.
2. A second value from home visits is the better orientation of the teacher toward conditions and ways of everyday living of adults.

By means of home visits the teacher may build up a richer background for applying the subject matter taught in the school to home life and out-of-school conditions. . . .

3. A third value of home visits is the opportunity they afford the teachers to be brought into contact with the points of view of parents with respect to the educational program, philosophy, objectives, and activities of the school in general.
4. A fourth and increasingly appreciated value of home visits is the opportunity they afford for developing better public relations (26:123).

One reason teachers do not visit more in the homes of the students might be that there already are so many demands on their time. This problem is apparently understood by Elsbree and McNally, for they state:

Some others schools intended provide for at least one visit by the teacher to the home of each pupil during the year.

One method of facilitating this is to release teachers a part of one school day each week or month. It is an imposition on the teachers to expect them to make such visits in the evenings entirely on their own time (11:434).

School Excursions

One might wonder how school excursions can be termed a form of communication. Let us remember that communication can be carried on through many channels. The desired result is understanding. Since school excursions bring about school-community understanding, they can be an effective method of communication. To document these remarks, a reference from the American Association of School Administrators¹ Twenty-eighth Yearbook is cited:

School excursions to points of community interest can be used to build better understanding of the educational program. Also by inviting business, industrial, governmental, and social leaders to address pupil groups on selected topics, the school can foster mutual understanding of school community problems (28:302).

School Exhibits and Demonstrations

This type of communication can be expressed in a number of ways. Stearns writes:

Resourceful school people will also find means of exhibiting essays, posters, examination papers, projects, apparatus, and home work assignments from all the other subjects of the curriculum. . . .

Showcases in corridors and entrance lobbies have become traditional means of continuous display. In operating such

displays, a continuing committee should function to insure proper rotation of all phases of school programs, to insure attractive arrangement and to insure periodic change of displays (35:324).

Stearns also says:

. . . resourceful teachers and administrators will find means of demonstrating all of the subject areas, the pupil activities, and the multiple services of the schools.

.

. . . In arranging such demonstrations, care should be exercised that they do not become too long.

.

. . . adequately presented demonstrations become effective means of presenting the schools to the public (35:325).

Apparently the American Association of School Administrators is in agreement with the idea that exhibits and demonstrations are good methods of communication, for they write:

Pupil groups in the typical community make many public appearances each year. These are excellent opportunities to show the results of classroom instruction and school activities. . . . They often contribute to general public community understanding and appreciation (28:301).

Some of the types of exhibits are:

1. In-school exhibits--student work in the halls, classrooms, and showcases, etc.
2. Out-of-school exhibits--store windows, meeting halls, public libraries, etc. (these could be examples of

pupils' work as well as live demonstrations).

3. Portable exhibits--mounted panels, maps, charts, etc.
4. Live demonstrations by pupils
5. Photographic exhibits
6. Dramatization and pageants (28:301).

Brownell, concerning demonstrations, says:

Demonstrations should portray actual events in the instructional program. In this way the general public learns to gain an understanding of, and a belief in, the worth of the given program. Such demonstrations present an opportunity to explain why each activity contains educational value. Demonstrations represent a direct and effective interpretive medium (3:227).

Experience has pointed to the caution that it is usually wise to be certain that those things exhibited or demonstrated are a part of the regular instructional program. It does not seem advisable to take valuable classroom time to prepare or exhibit something that is "dressed up" and gives the public an erroneous impression of the curriculum of the schools.

Life Magazine records a story about a third grade class which was taken to the public for four days by setting up a classroom in the store window of John M. Smyth furniture store in Chicago. This seemed like a novel way to bring the attention of the public to the schools and their program. The store window classroom was wired for sound so that the discussion, instruction, and conversation of the

classroom could be heard by the people on the sidewalk. This device drew considerable attention (7:144).

Attesting to its success, Life Magazine (7:144) is quoted as stating, "School authorities were so pleased with the experiment that they plan to do it again next year."

Public Opinion Polls

This type of activity device is probably aimed more at getting from the citizens their feeling concerning school matters than it is in relating information about the schools to the public. This is good. This is one of the devices which helps to achieve two-way communication. Fitzgerald proposes that this method is practical and scientifically sound:

The fact of the matter is that opinion measurement, as executed by polls, is one of the few sociological instruments we have that approaches really scientific standards.

. . . one who get deeply into the techniques can only wish that other instruments in the social field were as well developed (12:250).

Fitzgerald elaborates:

Aside from the utility which polls offer in such general fields, there is another and quite important area in which the polling technique can be used or adapted for use--the task of determining in advance of action, the opinions of special groups (12:257).

Stearns goes into a little more detail about opinion polls:

In appraising the value of opinion polls, the chief criteria lie in the preparation of the questions, the training and experience of those who conduct the polls, the statistical soundness of the selection of the sampling of people to be questioned, and the expertness of the interpretation. School officials who wish to use the technique of the opinion poll to test public opinion are well advised to secure the services of professional experts trained and experienced in the conduct of such polls. This does not rule out the use of simple, locally prepared questionnaires to obtain the answers to simple questions such as parent reaction to short sessions on stormy days, the hours of school, or lunch-room routine. But if the questionnaire is to test opinion on complicated matters such as building program, school finance, and curriculum policy or if the plan is to use statistical sampling of the population, then it is well to have the services of experts to prepare the questions, to select the sampling, to interview the people and to interpret the results. Further, the results of such a poll or questionnaire technique should always be followed by public discussion and the use of other means of presenting, refining, and testing public opinion (35:334).

It is apparent that Stearns considers the opinion poll an instrument of communication requiring careful handling, both in preparation and interpretation.

Staff and School Program

In this particular area, no other comment need be made than to quote Stearns:

Finally, it must be emphasized that there is no better community relations device than a good school program and an effective staff whose work is reflected in the various phases of community life which are affected by children.

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Truly, the presentation of a good school program to the community starts in the classroom (35:328).

Miscellaneous

During the summer of 1961, the writer of this thesis took a course at Central Washington College of Education from Dr. Delbert Peterson entitled Education 576a, Personnel Relations. In a discussion relating to communication and particularly to activity devices, the class members listed some worthwhile devices being used in schools. Some of those not already discussed in this chapter will be listed here without comment or elaboration. They are listed merely to confirm the point that there are many, many devices and methods in this area. Some of those listed by the class are as follows:

1. athletic events
2. forensics activities
3. public programs
4. concerts
5. art displays
6. graduation
7. county fair participation
8. science fairs
9. adult education
10. having students speak before community groups and
service clubs
11. students participating in community activities

12. inviting groups (service clubs, etc.) in to have lunch
with groups of students
13. interschool visitation
14. parent night
15. booster clubs

The findings related and documented in this third chapter are the basis for the proposed plan for developing purposeful communication between home and school for the Wenatchee elementary schools.

V. CONCLUSIONS

A review of the literature has prompted several conclusions. The first is that a well planned and carefully administered communication program is desirable for the Wenatchee elementary schools. It would greatly assist in obtaining a better degree of public understanding of and support for the Wenatchee elementary schools.

Also, there are many reasons for keeping the public informed about the schools. The following includes some of these:

1. The schools belong to the people. They have a right to know what is being done for the education of their children.
2. Continuous quality information about the schools increases public understanding and support of the schools.

3. A public accurately informed about the program of the schools will be able to handle intelligently the growing impact of national mass criticism of the schools.
4. Educational progress depends, in part at least, upon the consent of the parents and the other citizens of the community. Their consent will be more quickly secured if they understand why change must take place and how it will benefit their children and mankind.
5. Securing public consent for adequate financing of public education will require a high degree of skill in presenting information so as to command attention and reach all segments of the population. People must be assured that the public school money is being handled wisely.

Another conclusion is that a communication plan should have specific objectives to serve as guideposts. The objectives for the proposed communication plan for the Wenatchee elementary schools are as follows:

1. The people should understand the purposes of education in a democracy.
2. The plan should seek to develop a broader and deeper understanding of the instructional program.
3. Reports should be made periodically on the

accomplishments of the pupils.

4. Changes in the nature and number of the pupil population should be emphasized and repeated often.
5. Explanation should be made of the financial management of the schools in the Wenatchee district.
6. Citizens should become acquainted with problems facing the Wenatchee school system.
7. Popular confidence in the worth and value of the educational system should be increased.
8. The public should understand more fully the duties and responsibilities of those who direct and carry on the work of the schools.
9. Special services that play a part in the education of children should be explained.
10. Citizens should be urged to assume greater responsibility for the quality of education provided by the Wenatchee district.
11. A strong partnership between the school and the community should be established.
12. Whenever and wherever it is practical, individuals and groups should be involved in the program of the schools.

The literature reveals four prerequisites that should be considered in developing a plan for communication. The first is to block out the broad lines of action. This would involve such decisions as (a) whether or not a whirlwind campaign should be conducted for some purpose such as curtailing the spread of criticism, (b) if some long range program of establishing sound understanding of the financial picture of the district in preparation for some millage levy is indicated, (c) if there is need for a plan for continuous flow of information about the various phases of the curriculum, or (d) if several approaches should be in existence at the same time.

The second prerequisite is to decide upon the choice of appeals to be used. The appeal used must attract attention. To illustrate this point, a booklet describing the duties of guidance personnel would not be as well received by the public as a booklet telling how the problems of children are handled by that branch of the school educational program. Human interest factors tend to appeal to people. Every attempt should be made to use the type of appeal that will best serve the purpose of the communication and be most apt to promote full understanding on the part of those receiving the information.

The selection of the actual media to be used constitutes the third prerequisite. The selection will (a) vary with the purpose

intended and (b) depend upon the nature of the audiences, the funds and facilities available, and the competence of the personnel chosen to work with the communication program.

The fourth prerequisite calls for the entire plan to be drawn up on paper so that it may be constantly studied and reviewed.

Studies (19:23-25; 13:226-228) show that over the past thirty years the three school items the public is most interested in receiving information about have remained the same. Those are: (1) pupil progress and achievement, (2) methods of instruction, and (3) courses of study. This indicates that the school-home communication plan should be more concerned with things such as interpreting the reporting method rather than the after school sports program.

In addition to the conclusions already stated, several of a more general nature were made. They are:

1. That a really good communication program will employ a multiplicity of media which would range from a simple, but effective medium, such as face-to-face contacts, to the use of mass media such as newspaper and radio.
2. That involvement of citizens of the community in the school program is a good communication tool.
3. That participation and involvement of community citizens in the schools tends to increase favorable attitudes

toward the schools.

4. That steady, continuous educative communication, aimed at understanding, is the way to foster good community understanding and support.
5. That all methods and media must be used in proper relationship to one another to insure successful communication between school and home.

These conclusions serve as the basis for the plan developed in Chapter IV.

CHAPTER IV

THE PROPOSED PLAN

The research and documentation presented in this thesis are the bases for developing the proposed plan for school-home communication in the elementary schools of the Wenatchee school district.

This proposed plan of school-home communication for the Wenatchee elementary schools is based upon an elaboration of seven areas of development:

1. Defining objectives
2. Defining policy
3. Defining the central ideas or themes to be communicated
4. Defining the audiences
5. Selecting media or types of action to be taken
6. Scheduling
7. Providing some technique for evaluation.

Defining Objectives

The following are the suggested objectives for the proposed communication program.

1. To help the people in the Wenatchee elementary school service areas understand the purposes of education in

a democracy.

2. To help the people have a broader and deeper understanding of the instructional program of the Wenatchee elementary schools.
3. To do an adequate job of keeping the public informed about the educational accomplishments of the pupils.
4. To keep the public informed about school management and finance and its relation to the education of the children in the Wenatchee elementary schools.
5. To establish effective channels for a flow of communication and exchange of ideas between the school and the community.

Defining Policy

The communication policy of the Wenatchee elementary schools recognizes the right of citizens to be informed about school matters. It also recognizes the importance of a continuous program of factual and honest reports, appropriately presented, about the schools as they are. This policy also embodies the principle that good communication is an exchange of information and ideas between the public and the school as well as between the school and public.

Defining the Central Ideas or Themes to Be Communicated

The ideas or themes communicated should involve all the publics within the school and within the community. To accomplish this goal, an attempt should be made to achieve the six following purposes:

1. The objectives, conditions, and needs of the school should be constantly interpreted and explained to the publics of the community.
2. The attitudes, wishes, and reactions of the publics to the educational programs should be available to the school and its personnel.
3. The citizens of the community should be informed about the curriculum content, the new methods and innovations in the instructional program, or any experimental or pilot studies being conducted.
4. The financial and educational needs of the school should be presented to the community in such form that the citizens can understand them and provide for them.
5. The relationships between parents and teachers in the interests of each child should be strengthened, so that each can do his best to provide for the total development of that child.

6. The school and community organizations should recognize their mutual interests and obligations regarding education of the youth of the district.

Defining the Audiences

In the Wenatchee area, the types of audiences to which the elementary schools would expect to relate their communications are:

1. Parents of the school children
2. Business owners and employees
3. Orchard owners
 - a. with children in school
 - b. without children in school
4. Other property owners
 - a. with children in school
 - b. without children in school
5. Older citizens--retired and semi-retired
6. Other tax payers groups
7. Laborers
8. Pressure groups
 - a. Religious
 - b. Welfare and health
 - c. Professional

- d. Patriotic
- e. Civic service
- f. Industrial
- g. Political
- h. Miscellaneous

Selecting Media or Types of Action to Be Taken

When developing a communications program designed to inform such a diversity of audiences as those listed, the information as well as the media used to carry the communication should be varied. This is indicated because the many publics, or audiences as they may be called, will receive and interpret the communications in as many ways.

Even though a plan for using the various media is chosen, flexibility in departure from the plan should always be possible if such seems wise.

A numerical listing of media which would lend themselves to the development of a good communication program between the elementary schools and the homes of the Wenatchee school district has been compiled. Most of the items have previously been discussed in this thesis:

1. Face-to-face communications

- a. Addresses and talks by board and staff members
and teachers
 - b. Home visitations by staff members and teachers
 - c. Informal school visitation by parents and citizens
 - d. Personal and social contacts by staff members,
teachers, and board members
 - e. Student representation to various service clubs
and other community organizations
- 2. Teacher-Parent conferences
 - 3. Radio broadcasts
 - 4. Use of telephone by school officials, teachers, and the
people of the community
 - 5. Messages carried by the children between the school and
the home
 - 6. Letters to parents and citizens of the public
 - 7. Newsletters about the schools to the parents
 - 8. Brochures, reports, booklets
 - 9. Press releases to the newspaper
 - 10. Report cards
 - 11. Group letters written by the classroom teacher about the
activities in her room and sent home with the pupils in
her class

12. Handbooks for parents
13. Group meetings
 - a. at school
 - b. in the community
14. Group parent-teacher conference
15. Parent-Teacher Association meetings
16. Formation of lay citizen groups
17. A program of public involvement during American Education Week
18. An Education-Business day
19. Promote school excursions, or field trips, to places of interest in the community
20. School exhibits and demonstrations
21. Plan and conduct a public opinion poll
22. School sponsored public programs involving pupils
 - a. music programs
 - b. art displays
 - c. science fairs
 - d. Christmas programs
23. Invite groups (service clubs, etc.) in to have lunch with groups of students

24. When disseminating information about the schools make use of such things as:
- a. posters
 - b. diagrams
 - c. graphs
 - d. cartoons
25. Prepare and use pictures
- a. still
 - b. candid
 - c. slides
 - d. filmstrip
 - e. movies
26. Television at present cannot be utilized as a communication medium in Wenatchee. However, it would be wise to keep abreast of television development and be ready for the opportunity if it comes.

Scheduling

This proposed plan calls for a schedule which is calendar-oriented. Each month of the school year, excluding summer vacation time but including August, is listed. Listed under each month will be a selection of the type of communication appropriate for that month and

that time of year. In actually carrying out such a program, those in charge must be alert to timing and must be willing to make changes and adapt as the situation seems to dictate. Basically, the proposed calendar-oriented plan would promote good school-home communication. However, it is only a guide and must be localized to serve the needs in each of the Wenatchee elementary school service areas. Furthermore, some items and some media would be revised and changed from year to year, even though the same basic plan were used.

Based upon opinions expressed and found through reviewing the literature, this proposed plan should insure a sound and continuous flow of communication between home and school for the Wenatchee elementary schools.

The proposed calendar will begin with the month of August and close with the month of June.

August

A. Newspaper articles

1. Condition of buildings and grounds, amount of repair, painting, surfacing, grass, etc.
2. Information about teachers
 - a. those not returning

- b. their replacements and additional staff
 - (1) background
 - (2) training
 - (3) experience
 - 3. Information on the opening of school
 - a. date
 - b. registration
 - c. hot lunch program
 - d. bus routes and schedules
 - e. school hours
 - 4. Information about any new curriculum experiments, pilot studies, new emphasis, or new courses, etc.
- B. Radio: Arrange for spot announcements about many of the same items as are being released to the newspaper

September

- A. Send a parent handbook home with pupils on the first day of school, including information about such things as:
- 1. fees
 - 2. insurance

3. school patrol
 4. school rules affecting students
 5. policy on absence and tardiness
 6. report cards
 7. pupil dress and grooming
 8. hot lunch program
 9. P-TA meetings
 10. schedule of the school day
 11. calendar of the school year
 12. staff roster
 13. homework policy
 14. parent visitation
 15. school bus information
 16. appropriate miscellaneous items
- B. Newspaper and Radio releases
1. enrollment
 2. P-TA announcements and coverage
 3. monthly feature story: School Buses
 - a. how many
 - b. how many children ride
 - c. total miles driven per day
 - d. cost of buses

- e. cost of operation and how financed
 - f. selection and training of drivers
 - g. earliest time a child is picked up
 - h. longest route
 - i. some human interest angle
 - 4. taped or live radio interview of new teachers
 - 5. explanation of the boys' after-school football program
- C. P-TA
- 1. feature getting acquainted with teachers and staff
 - 2. remarks by principal on school matters
- D. Group letter (teacher-prepared) from each class, briefly summing the activities of their first few weeks
- E. Conduct and evaluate the findings of a public opinion poll

October

- A. Newspaper and Radio releases
- 1. P-TA announcements and coverage
 - 2. coverage on teachers' institute

3. feature story: Health services provided by the school
 - a. when and how often the nurse is at school
 - b. her services and scope of program
 - (a) visual screening
 - (b) hearing tests
 - (c) immunization clinics
 - (d) miscellaneous services
 - c. home calls and consultation
 - d. explanation of policy on communicable diseases
- B. Letter home to parents inviting them to come and visit school in session
- C. Encourage student field trips into the community places of business and industry
- D. Have an exhibit of a school project or class project at P-TA
- E. Follow-up on the opinion poll: select an area where a need for better understanding was indicated and determine the type of media which could best be used to create better understanding

- F. Form a lay cooperating council--an organization through which the feelings of the community can be shared and expressed (a sounding board)

November

- A. Newspaper and Radio releases
 - 1. American Education Week
 - a. school observance of
 - b. special invitation to public
 - 2. elementary schools parent-teacher conference program
 - 3. P-TA announcement and coverage
 - 4. feature story: Testing program
 - a. types of tests and sequence
 - b. administration, scoring and interpretation
 - c. records
 - d. special services (testing)
- B. Parent teacher conferences: teachers conference parents of all their students
- C. Monthly follow-up of opinion poll: appropriately taking care of an expressed concern
- D. Monthly meeting of the cooperating council

December

A. Newspaper and Radio releases

1. P-TA announcements and coverage
2. information on the school Christmas programs
3. dates of Christmas recess
4. feature story: Some special, interesting, class work
 - a. brief of purpose
 - b. details of the project
 - c. include picture using students
5. musical group to perform on radio

B. Utilize students in a music program

1. either P-TA or
2. Christmas program

C. Invite a service club in to lunch with the students

D. Exhibit student Christmas art projects at P-TA

January

A. Newspaper and Radio releases

1. P-TA announcements and coverage
2. have a group of primary students read some original stories or poems on the radio

3. feature story: Vacations: write up interesting Christmas experiences and travel of teachers and staff
 4. information on the boys after school basketball program
- B. P-TA meeting: show slides of pictures taken of some aspect of the school curriculum
 - C. Monthly follow-up on opinion poll
 - D. Monthly meeting of the cooperating council
 - E. Have teachers prepare and send home another group letter telling of some of the recent class activity, and inviting parents in to visit classes
 - F. Send out a letter of commendation from the office to the parents of good students
 - G. Invite school board members in to visit classrooms with the principal

February

- A. Newspaper and Radio releases
 1. P-TA announcements and coverage
 2. feature story: Tumbling and rhythms
 - a. emphasized in winter
 - b. use of multipurpose room

c. purpose

d. use pictures involving students

B. P-TA

1. as part of the program, have students give a

demonstration of rhythms and tumbling

2. demonstration to be accompanied by explanation

from teachers or principal

C. Monthly follow-up on opinion poll

D. Monthly meeting of the cooperating council

E. Encourage teachers to make home visits

F. Arrange for some students to attend a service club meeting and give talks on such subjects as science, a way they study social studies, or carry on a conversation or give a little play in Spanish

March

A. Newspaper and Radio releases

1. P-TA announcements and coverage

2. elementary school's participation in the science fair

3. dates of spring vacation

4. publish some creative writing done by some of the pupils

B. P-TA

1. have the science fair entries on exhibit
2. invite the school superintendent in to discuss
school finance and management

C. Monthly follow-up on the opinion poll

D. Monthly meeting of the cooperating council

E. Invite parents in to observe the string instrument
program

April

A. Newspaper and Radio releases

1. P-TA announcements and coverage
2. information about the girls and boys spring
track program
3. festival school parade information
4. registration in May for next year's first
graders
5. feature story: Music
 - a. consultants
 - b. teacher taught
 - c. scope of the program
 - (a) singing and appreciation

(b) theory

(c) strings

6. have radio station interview some outstanding school citizens

B. P-TA--Emphasize special service

1. Special education department
 - a. psychological testing
 - b. speech therapy
 - c. achievement rooms
 - d. program for the hard of hearing and visually handicapped
 - e. school to home phone system for students who must be out for long periods of time
2. testing and guidance
3. audio-visual aids
4. health
5. buses
6. cafeteria

C. Follow-up on the opinion poll

D. Monthly meeting of the cooperating council

E. Education-Business day--if in this month

May and June

- A. Newspaper and Radio releases
 - 1. P-TA announcements and coverage
 - 2. information on the progress and outcome of the boys and girls track program
 - 3. list of next year's seventh graders
 - 4. write-up on awards assembly
 - 5. information on the orientation program
 - 6. feature story: Information on the elementary summer school
 - a. improvement program
 - b. enrichment program
- B. Another letter home from the school office commending good students
- C. Teacher prepared group letters sent home with class pupils briefly summing the year's accomplishments
- D. Monthly follow-up on the opinion poll
 - 1. conduct another poll aimed at securing suggestions for improving communication channels
 - 2. evaluate the poll
- E. Monthly meeting of the cooperating council with emphasis on suggestions for next year's program

In addition to the above proposed calendar, some projects that would involve the parents and citizens of the Wenatchee elementary school service areas could be carried on throughout the year. These projects would serve to continue the flow of communications and foster better understanding between the school and the home.

Projects such as and similar to the ones listed below seem to be the type to promote home school understanding:

1. Try to have every parent visit a classroom at least once during the year to see the teacher at work and the children in a learning situation.
2. Encourage the teachers to make as many home visits as possible during the course of the school year. Released time should be provided.
3. Make use of resource people throughout the school year: bankers, dentists, newspaper staff, bakery, post office, various types of collectors and hobby enthusiasts, telephone company, industrial officials, librarians, museum personnel, etc.
4. Promote study groups within the P-TA.
5. Invite sports minded people in to officiate at sports events.

6. When practical, use citizens in various planning stages of school programming.
7. Have mothers help with health services and library work.
8. Look for opportunities to use parents as teachers' aides--lunchroom, activity programs, clubs, hobbies, collections, mimeo work, etc.

Evaluation

It would be difficult to evaluate a communication program of the nature and scope of this one. However, evaluation is an important part of a communication program. Good evaluation procedures would include continual appraising as the program develops and attempts to determine the effectiveness after a given time--such as a year.

Because there are so many factors related to evaluating the program, such as the educational program, the pupil, the achieving of goals and objectives, cooperative participation, adaptation to local needs, lay leadership, community cooperation, and appealing to varied publics, it is especially difficult to achieve adequate evaluation. All of these factors, and more, should be considered when deciding upon an evaluating procedure.

There is always the temptation to measure the success of an

undertaking from the viewpoint of the individual or individuals who have worked closely with it. This subjective approach is influenced by bias, prejudice, conflicting personalities, and emotional considerations. Obviously, this would be unlikely to produce a true evaluation.

Every effort should be made to conduct an honest and unbiased appraisal. To do this, the approach should be kept as objective as possible. Attempting continually to answer questions such as the following would help keep the evaluation objective:

1. Are the basic philosophy and purposes being kept constantly in mind?
2. What is being evaluated--according to what values?
3. Has the program matured to the point where sound conclusions can be drawn?
4. What aspects of the program are of great value, what of little or no value?
5. If it seems advisable, how can revision take place in the light of known facts?
6. How can evaluation be made a cooperative process involving both the schools and the public?
7. Is evaluation being made at all stages of progress?

8. Is evaluative data being collected and filed systematically?

Other appropriate methods and considerations which may be used to help assess the worth of the school communication program in Wenatchee are (1) staff conferences, (2) the amount of newspaper space given for school coverage, (3) frequency of radio announcements related to the schools, (4) public response in the form of letters or increased attendance at school functions, (5) the increase in volunteers for school projects, and (6) the increased ease by which problems are solved. These can all be indications of the progress of the communication plan and should be observed continually.

One valid way to get reliable information on how the people are reacting to the Wenatchee elementary school communication program is to go to the people themselves. The opinion poll is the best means available for judging the public's reaction. The opinion poll is especially effective for checking the nature of outcomes when the survey involves a large number of people. Therefore, in addition to careful observation and constant assessment of the questions and items already mentioned, the use of the opinion poll is proposed for evaluating the proposed plan for communication for the Wenatchee elementary schools.

By wisely using the information received from observation and the opinion polls, changes in the feelings and attitudes of the public can be noted from one period of time to another. Issues can then be defined and any desirable redirection of effort may be planned and executed.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY

Communication, the process of transmitting meaningful symbols between individuals, is to some degree an influence upon all of society. The purpose of communication is to promote understanding among individuals and community groups. Therefore, this paper has attempted to establish that a good communication program between school and home is essential to promote mutual understanding and support.

Understanding, then, is one of the principal goals of communication. Other goals are getting acceptance of or agreement with information and ideas communicated, and to provide action.

A good communications program requires continuous effort. It makes necessary a constant flow of information between the home and the school. This flow of communication must, however, be of high quality. A large quantity of poor communication will not accomplish the purpose. Communication must be meaningful. Development of understanding takes time and sustained work. Real progress can be made with well-planned and constant effort.

Communication media must be varied in order to reach all of the publics in the school service area. These media have been

grouped into four general areas of communication. They are (1) oral, (2) written, (3) graphic, and (4) activity devices. Within each of these areas are specific media which can be used throughout the year, and years, to build a strong school and home communication program.

The following list, by area, includes many of those discussed in this thesis.

Oral

1. face to face
2. parent conferences
3. speaking
4. radio and television
5. telephone
6. teacher influence
7. children
8. listening

Written

1. letters and announcements
2. brochures, reports, booklets
3. newspaper
4. report card
5. group letters
6. parent handbook

Graphic devices

1. posters
2. diagrams
3. graphs
4. sign boards
5. pictures
 - a. still
 - b. slides
 - c. filmstrip
 - d. movies
6. display of pupils' work and projects

Activity devices

1. public involvement
2. group meetings
3. group parent-teacher conferences
4. parent-teacher association
5. parent visitation
6. personal contacts
7. lay citizens groups
8. American Education Week
9. Education-Business day
10. home visits

11. school excursions
12. school exhibits and demonstrations
13. public opinion polls
14. staff and school program
15. public programs
16. science fairs

Communication, to be effective, must be two-way. Channels must be provided for communication to flow from home to school as well as from school to home. McCloskey gets at two-way communication through what he calls "encoding." He uses such terms as encoding, decoding, transmitting, receiving, feedback, and mutual understanding. All of this has been discussed in Chapter III.

Chapter IV of this thesis covered the proposed plan of communication between the schools and the homes of the elementary schools in the Wenatchee school district.

As many of the media discussed in Chapter III under the headings of oral, written, graphic, and activity device types of communication as seemed feasible for Wenatchee were used to construct a school-home communication plan for its elementary schools. This plan was devised to follow the calendar months. Under each month of the school year, those media which seemed appropriate were employed as channels to carry the flow of communication from the schools to

the public and from the public to the schools.

Those characteristics considered essential to a good communication program were used in developing this plan. It is planned; it is continuous; it is interesting; it is balanced; it is designed to reach everyone in the elementary school service areas; it uses a variety of media; and it provides for flexibility.

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